

CHAPTER XIII.—MINES AND MINERALS

CONSPECTUS

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The interpretation of the symbols used in the tables throughout the Year Book will be found on p. xvi of this volume.

Section 1.—Canada's Mineral Industry—Historical and Current*

Historical

Canada's mining industry has a long history of exploration, development and production that pre-dates Confederation in 1867. In the 17th century, silver and copper were discovered in what is now Nova Scotia and the existence of coal on Cape Breton Island and bog iron deposits in the St. Maurice Valley of Quebec was known. Coal was produced in Cape Breton and iron ore for iron-smelting operations was produced in several communities of Quebec in the 18th century. However, it was not until the 1800s that development of mineral resources began on a significant scale and by the middle of that century there had been sufficient mineral activity to give promise of a major resource industry. A number of discoveries had been made in Eastern Canada but the most spectacular was the discovery of gold in British Columbia in the 1850s which brought thousands of people to that area. Settlement, railway construction, agricultural expansion and industrialization have followed many other mineral discoveries in later years.

In the second half of the 1800s mining activity began its accelerating trend, as indicated by a few of the most notable discoveries. In the 1860s a thriving oil industry was established in southwestern Ontario, following an initial discovery near Petrolia in the late 1850s. Asbestos was discovered in the Eastern Townships of Quebec in 1877. In 1883, nickel-copper ores were found at Sudbury in Ontario and in 1886 some 3,000 tons of copper ore were removed; today the area is the world's leading source of nickel. A number of gold, silver and base metal discoveries were made in southern British Columbia in the 1890s, including the great Sullivan mine, following an initial copper-gold discovery at Rossland in 1889. In 1896, the famous Klondike discovery in the Yukon precipitated the world's most spectacular gold rush. At the turn of the century, silver ore was discovered at

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